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20 February 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: [South Vietnamese military leaders have put down the coup in Saigon, but they also appear to have taken this occasion to oust General Khanh as armed forces commander.]

[At a joint meeting this morning of representatives of the armed forces and the Quat government, Khanh is reported to have received a no confidence vote. Although Khanh still may seek to contest this action, General Dong, the military governor of Saigon, expects him to choose exile abroad instead. Dong also anticipates that leadership of the armed forces will devolve to General Nguyen Van Thieu, a deputy premier and the minister of the armed forces]

[Earlier in the morning, senior commanders with units near Saigon dislodged rebel forces from their positions in and around the capital with little or no bloodshed. Colonel Pham Ngoc Thao appears to be under arrest, but former General Phat and former Colonel Ton, the two other principal coup leaders have reportedly disappeared.]

[The ease with which the rebels were dispersed suggests the possibility of a deal between the coup leaders and those commanders who opposed the coup but shared the rebels' distaste for Khanh. It became quickly apparent yesterday that the coup group would be unable to attract enough additional military support to make its takeover stick. The coup leaders may thus have decided to strike a bargain, settling merely for Khanh's removal and possibly promises of lenient treatment for themselves]

[Even though Khanh appears to have been ousted and even though the militant Catholic elements represented in the coup attempt have again been thwarted, serious divisions will remain in the military establishment. For example, two controversial officers, General Thi of I Corps and General Ky of the Air Force, appear to have strengthened their positions for the moment, but may face increased hostility from some of their colleagues]

[The Buddhist leadership, while not involved in the events of the past two days, will probably be gratified by the suppression of a neo-Diemist coup attempt and the apparent ouster of Khanh, who was increasingly becoming the target of criticism by Tri Quang]

[No significant deployment of North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist military forces has been detected in the past twenty four hours. The Viet Cong have continued widespread but generally small scale guerrilla activity]

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*USSR-Vietnam: Moscow's extreme caution in dealing with the Vietnam crisis is reflected in its noncommittal attitude toward the possibility of negotiations.

This lack of initiative apparently results in part from the Soviet leaders' desire to avoid an open divergence with the Hanoi and Peiping regimes. These regimes probably believe that any overture toward negotiations would be interpreted as a sign of wavering in the face of US actions. The USSR probably also wishes to play for time to assess further developments in US policy.

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[During talks over the past several days with the French and Canadian ambassadors, Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin failed to respond to specific queries regarding Moscow's position on a Vietnam conference. He took refuge in vigorous attacks on US actions.]

[Deputy Foreign Minister Lapin, in an interview with the British ambassador on 16 February, repeatedly said there could be no question of negotiations while US bombings continued. He also refused to answer a direct question as to whether the USSR would support a conference.]

[The Soviet press, however, continues to report differences between the US and its allies and proposals by Western leaders for convening a conference. Low-ranking Soviet officials, moreover, have expressed interest in a Vietnam conference or in "preliminary discussions" of a cease-fire. Other Soviet representatives have privately stressed the danger that the Vietnam crisis may develop into a major war and have suggested the need for US-Soviet talks on measures to stabilize the situation in Southeast Asia.]

(continued)

Soviet spokesmen continue to emphasize that the USSR had no foreknowledge of Viet Cong attacks on US personnel. Some have claimed that these incidents were inspired by the Chinese Communists in order to embarrass Premier Kosygin and to disrupt US-Soviet relations. This line was taken by Marshal Rotmistrov, head of the Soviet armored forces, in a 15 February talk with Ambassador Kohler.]

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* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

Indonesia: The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) continues to pursue its aggressive campaign to eliminate US facilities and properties in Indonesia.

The USIS library in Medan, North Sumatra, re-opened yesterday after having been occupied for several hours the previous day by members of a Communist youth front. Indonesian police evicted the intruders, lowered the Indonesian flag and sanctioned the re-opening. However, three USIS installations in other parts of the country that have been subjected to mob attacks over the past six months have been closed under "temporary protective custody" of the central government.

Demonstrations by Communist-dominated labor groups continue at American-owned rubber plantations in North Sumatra. The Communists hope either to occupy the estates themselves or to force government seizure.

Medan officials have told the US consul that the plantations might be taken over "by proclamation." The ranking area police official, however, assured the consul that any such seizure would not go so far as a "physical take-over." There are seven American-owned plantations in Sumatra totaling about 70,000 acres.

The Indonesian Government and the PKI at the present time appear to have the same objective of ridding the country of Western influence. The PKI seems to be in more of a hurry, however, and has repeatedly pressured Djakarta to take earlier action than probably had been planned.

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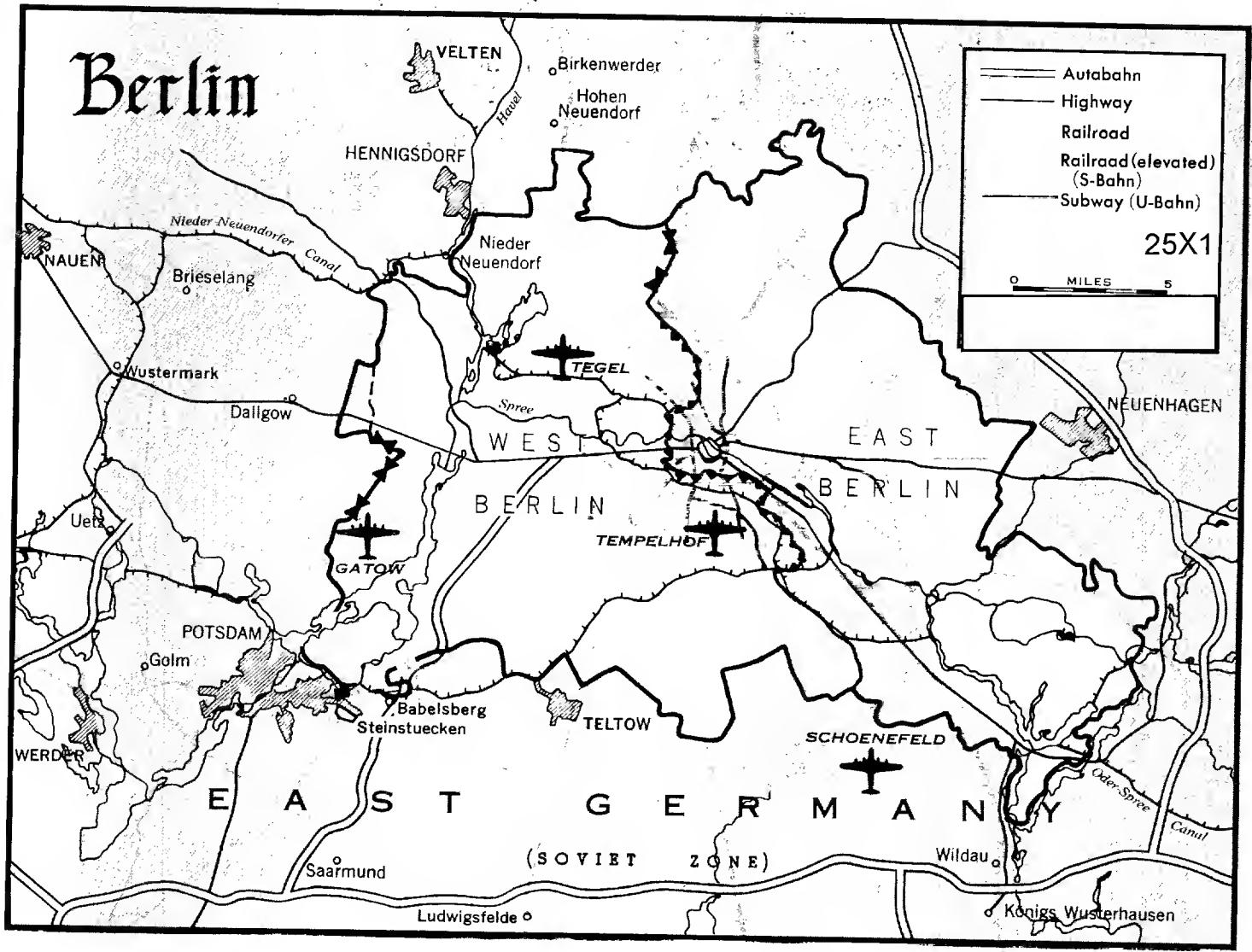
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► DITCH CONSTRUCTION

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*East Germany - West Berlin: [The East German regime has ordered the excavation of a large ditch along the sector and zonal borders around West Berlin, apparently to supplement or replace existing fortifications.]

[The ditch is approximately 16 feet wide and 9 feet deep. One 1,600-yard portion has already been completed.]

[excavation in progress at five other sites on the zonal border opposite the British and French sectors.]

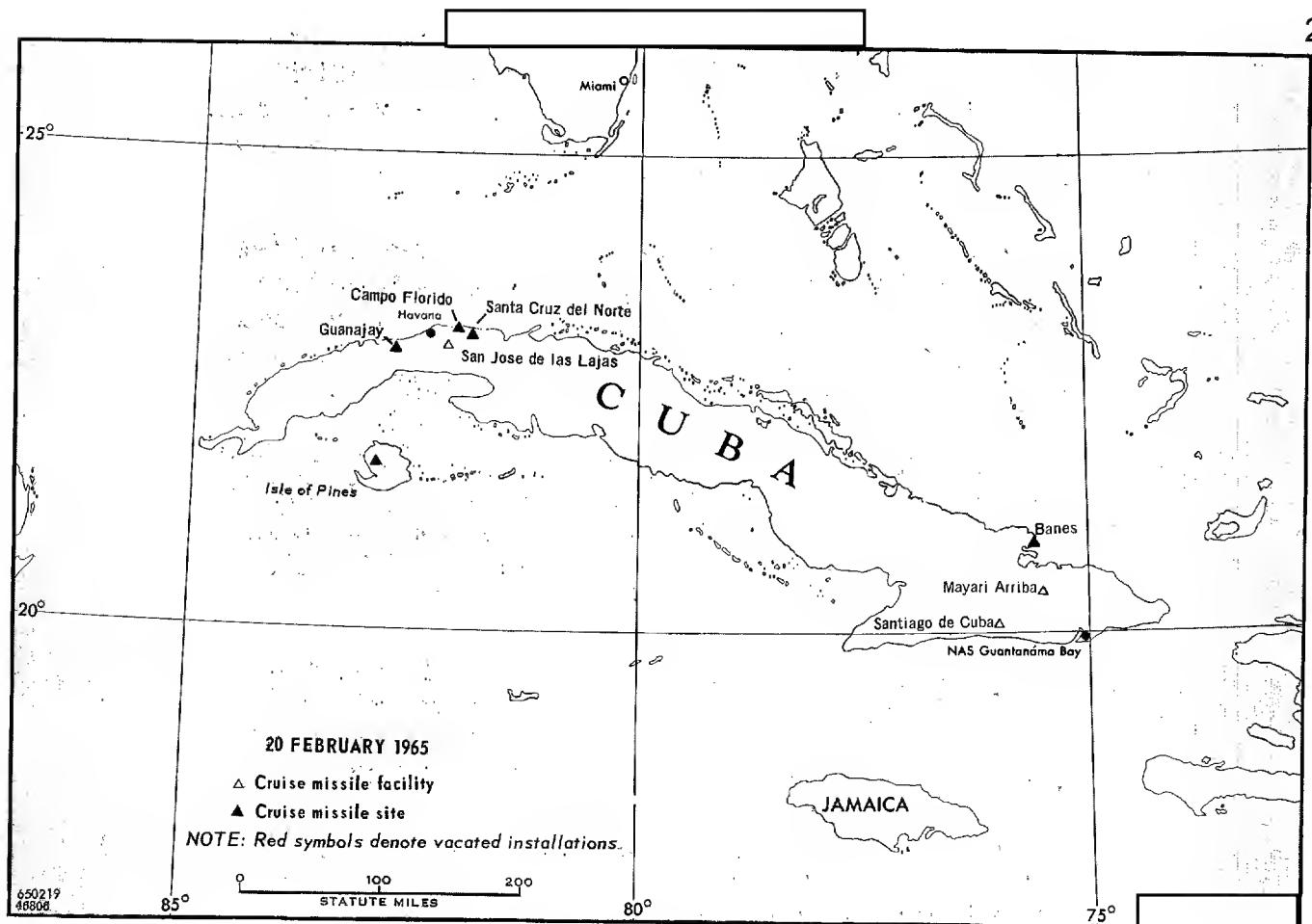
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[A large number of bulldozers and other earth-moving equipment has been massed at Busendorf, 15 miles outside Berlin, presumably in preparation for an all-out effort on the project.]

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Cuba: The regime continues to strengthen military defenses in the Havana area.

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The Cubans appear to be establishing a new cruise missile site at Guanajay, west of Havana, where two unrevetted cruise-missile launchers, eight transporters, and seven crates, apparently containing missiles, were observed on the 17th. This equipment may have been shifted from the training site at Camno Florida.

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Cuba has two types of cruise missiles, one for coastal defense and the other for use against ground targets. There are about 150 cruise-missile crates on the island. The only operational sites at present are on the Isle of Pines and at Santa Cruz del Norte, both for coastal defense and both in western Cuba. A third site, at Banes, was deactivated early this month.

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NOTE

France: [Paris will probably turn down the US request for approval of TAB-V, an exercise involving dispersal of tactical air squadrons to operating bases in France, Germany, and the UK. A Foreign Ministry official stated that this request, which is supplemental to the already approved annual exercise list, is inopportune and would attract special attention in the National Defense Council, over which De Gaulle often presides personally. He said the council would "certainly reject" a proposal based on the implied assumption that nuclear-armed planes would be able to use airfields in France under alert conditions.]

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